

## Brokenness

*The life of a congregation is a rich community tapestry of people, programs, ministries and worship. We lift up the patterns of this tapestry at Unity Church with the threads of monthly themes woven through our worship and programming. These themes deepen our understanding of our own faith and strengthen our bonds with one another in religious community. We explore each theme in worship and in our newsletter; in covenant groups, and religious education; and in our community outreach ministries, our literary journal and programs, and many other opportunities.*

*Ring the bells that still can ring*

*Forget your perfect offering*

*There is a crack in everything*

*That's how the light gets in.*

– Leonard Cohen, *Anthem*

Brokenness is a reality of life. Different than sin, brokenness is the imperfection, the old wound, and the new hurt that are always part of living on this earth. Our human condition inevitably includes imperfection and pain. Some breaks can heal, some imperfections can transform. Some cannot. Some breaks forever change us, and some faults of character are with us our entire lives. We need to find the balance between continually moving towards wholeness and healing, and being present with what is here and now.

The movement toward wholeness works *with* being present now. We might imagine them circling around one another like two spiraling fish rather than being opposed to one another. Accepting loss is an important part of the grieving process. Experiencing and being present with pain helps transform it. There is no way around pain and grief—the only way out is through it.

In Theravada Buddhism, there is a story of a monk teaching his students about brokenness by explaining to them that the cup he holds is already broken. He explains that because he knows it is broken, he cradles the cup in his hands. His response to knowing the brokenness is coming, is to hold the cup dearly now. The coming pain of the break is

inevitable, but how one responds to it is one's choice. We can choose to respond by resisting the inevitability, which will create suffering. If we accept it, the pain and break still exist but the suffering does not. Pain is inevitable in life, but suffering is our choice.

We need to understand our own patterned response to brokenness. Where do we go when we are broken? Do we typically lean into brokenness? Do we deny it and avoid it? Do we try to fix brokenness immediately because we are uncomfortable with letting it be? Or do we throw broken things away too quickly without trying to repair them? When we notice our own patterns, we can lean in the direction of balance.

If we pay attention to our experience of brokenness, there is much we can learn. What is our spiritual reaction to it? Many people have had some of their most clear moments of truth while experiencing brokenness. The break can cause the mind's busyness to quiet and the ego to empty. This offers a clearer vision of reality, and a deep sense of interconnectedness with all being emerges, which some understand as God. This experience can come in other ways, too. One does not have to experience trauma to spiritually mature, nor does all trauma induce this sort of transformative experience. But many people have had a deep sense of tranquil interconnectedness during intense loss. It has a particular way of revealing that given reality underlying our busy daily lives. The experience

of this underlying interconnection is not the purpose of pain, but can be a blessed consequence of it.

The break can be a spiritual learning opportunity for individuals, churches, and society. If we know brokenness is inevitable and that we can learn and grow from it, how do we spiritually prepare ourselves for it? What is a spiritual discipline that would increase our capacity for spiritual resilience in the face of crisis?

–Jennifer Nordstrom

and this month's theme team:

Janne Eller-Isaacs, Rob Eller-Isaacs,  
Lisa Friedman, KP Hong, and Ruth Palmer

### Brokenness Resources

#### BOOKS

*Broken for You* by Stephanie Kallos

*Finding Beauty in a Broken World*  
by Terry Tempest Williams

*Blessed Unrest: How the Largest  
Social Movement in History Is  
Restoring Grace, Justice, and Beauty  
to the World* by Paul Hawken

#### CHILDREN'S BOOKS

*Charlie is broken!* by Lauren Child

*Beautiful Oops!* by Barney Salzberg

*Puff the Magic Dragon* by Peter Yarrow

#### MOVIES

*Crash* (2004). Directed by Paul Haggis.

*Babel* (2006). Directed by Alejandro González Iñárritu.

## Just Words

A few weeks ago, I was standing in line at a local grocery store while my items were being scanned and counted. It was one of those stores where they have employees to help with bagging, something I don't experience very often at the local and much loved co-op, Mississippi Market, where I do most of my shopping. The bagger graciously asked if he could help me out with my bags. My response was immediate. In a slightly defensive tone (perhaps even a bit insulted), I told him I didn't need his help, thank you very much. He laughed and told me that he was thinking of writing a book based on the responses he received from the simple question, "Can I help you out with your bags?" He said that there was a group of folks who were relieved to be asked and graciously accepted his offer of help. Still others, politely if not graciously declined his offer of help. Then of course there were people like me, who seemed to think he was making a judgement on our ability to deal with our own grocery bags by his simple offer of help. Guilty as charged. As an aging feminist, I don't want anyone to judge my ability to deal with the details of my life. I don't want anyone assuming that I *need* help. I stood around while he bagged the next few customers talking with him and watching him interact with them. It was true. Most of the customers graciously declined. Not me. I kept standing there. A woman about my age came through the line. He innocently asked. She responded similarly to the way I had. I was stunned. I asked him to help me with my bags just so we could continue our conversation. I also wanted to experience what it felt like to have someone help me. I realized no one was watching us, snickering at my need or incompetence. He was genuinely trying to be helpful.

I have been watching myself carefully since this fateful grocery store outing. I no longer snap at offers of help. I have even let folks bag my groceries without apologizing or pushing them out of the way, insisting that "I can do it myself!" I know the words sound like a toddler, but as a woman who had to prove, who continues to have to prove ability and competence, these issues may never go away. As a second wave feminist, I knew I had a lot to prove to the world along with my other sisters. We knew we could never relax, never let ourselves be seen as less than, never be seen as needing anyone's help. But of course we do need help. We do need our communities of connection, stability, and strength. It is the source of real strength.

So once again, I had a learning opportunity about need and vulnerability. Having someone bag my groceries was not a statement about my ability but rather about how we can open ourselves up to help and support in its many guises. I still have a lot to learn but at least I am out there talking to the people in line at the store and more importantly to the folks who are genuinely helpful.

— *Janne*

## Sabbatical News

Unity Church has always supported its called ministers by providing sabbatical leaves on a regular basis. Intended both for restoration and for continuing education, sabbatical is generally offered every 4-7 years. Accepted practice is to provide a month of leave for every year served not to exceed six months. The Board has approved a two month leave this year so that Janne and Rob have extended time with their first grandchild who was born February 12, 2014, in Portland, Oregon. They plan to use the additional four months available to them for study and travel next year.

## The Wheel of Life

### In Celebration

*Lewis Pete Eller-Furgeson*  
*born one more redeemer*  
February 12, 2014  
to parents  
*Jessie Eller-Isaacs and*  
*Andy Anderson-Furgeson*  
and grandparents  
*Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs*

### In Memoriam

*Leon Raymond Goodrich*  
February 17, 2014  
*Constance Catherine McGuire Oace*  
January 1, 2014  
*Ronald G. Reed*  
February 21, 2014

## From the Archives...

The Archives Team has opened and inventoried more than 100 boxes, many of which hold the history of audio-visual formats. We have found video (both Beta and VHS), reel-to-reel, filmstrips, audio cassettes, and a variety of unidentified formats. If anyone knows about older AV materials, we'd love to hear from you! Please contact Louise Merriam at [machias1@gmail.com](mailto:machias1@gmail.com).

**commUNITY** is the newsletter of Unity Church—Unitarian. It is published monthly, except the month of July. Deadlines are the 15th of each month. Subscriptions are free to those who make pledges to Unity Church and are available to others for \$30 per year.

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# SUNDAY WORSHIP

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## March Worship Calendar

Sunday worship services are held at 9:00 and 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m. except where noted.

### March 2: Beyond Repair

Rob Eller-Isaacs

Some things just can't be fixed. This presents a major challenge for those of us who believe every problem can be solved. There are times when we need to let go. There are times when all we can do is be present, to bear witness and surrender to reality. Rob and worship associate Phil Lowry will begin a series of services on brokenness.

### March 9: Repurposing a Broken Heart

Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs

Every Sunday the words, "Your gifts and your wounds are welcome here," are spoken during worship. To be in real community with one another we are called to share our very human imperfections and brokenness but it is a demanding spiritual practice to do so. Janne and worship associate, Bailey Webster will explore the meaning of brokenness in the midst of wholeness.

### March 16: To Reconstitute the World

Rob Eller-Isaacs

We live in a broken and beautiful world. Some of us try to escape into the beauty. Others think what is broken must be made whole before there can be any joy. It is a false but seductive dialectic. Rob and worship associate Drew Ross will wrestle with the tension between brokenness and beauty.

### March 23: Forget Your Perfect Offering

Rob and Janne Eller-Isaacs

As they depart for grandparental leave, Rob and Janne offer a service inviting everyone to step up to the joys and challenges of sharing fully in the ministry of the church. None of us is perfect. Each of us has gifts to bring. Mary Margaret Zindren will serve as worship associate.

### March 30: And They All Fell Down

Rev. Aaron McEmrys

When I was a child I played a lot of "Cowboys and Indians." The game never ended until everyone was on the ground. As I return from my latest visit among the Hopi and Navajo people, I find myself aching over those childhood games and all they represent. About things that once broken, stay broken. About things that can be mended. And about building anew on the ground brokenness leaves.

The Rev. Aaron McEmrys is the Senior Minister of the Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara. Before beginning his ministry, Aaron worked as a union and community organizer, and economic justice and workers rights remain an important part of his ministry. An avid storyteller, McEmrys is author of *After Aesop: Stories for All Ages*.

## March Offering Recipients

Each Sunday, thirty percent of the offering goes to support the Community Outreach Ministry at Unity Church and seventy percent is given to the chosen community non-profit recipient. Please make checks payable to Unity Church.

### March 2: Unitarian Universalist Association

This offering will support the Unitarian Universalist Association and will help religious professionals get ongoing training to support thriving congregations.

### March 9: Children's Cancer Research Fund

As part of a Minnesota Destination Imagination (DI) team, a group of youth has been meeting regularly at Unity Church since the beginning of the school year. DI is a non-profit, volunteer-led, cause-driven educational program that inspires and equips students to become the next generation of innovators and leaders. Through DI, students solve open-ended challenges and present their solutions at tournaments. The group meeting at the church has chosen to support the Children's Cancer Research Fund with every dollar matched by \$15-\$20 from their national grant program. Three of Unity's youth are members of this DI team including Lucy Niemann, Maddy Breton, and Melissa Elmer.

### March 16: Balazs Scholar Program

This offering supports the Balazs Scholar Program that brings a Unitarian Universalist minister to study in the U.S. at the Star King School for the Ministry. The school provides this support through fundraising, administrative assistance and tuition for each new scholar. For many years, Unity's Partner Church Team has hosted the Balazs Scholar here in St. Paul and continues to support this important UU ministry through this yearly offering.

### March 23: Mano a Mano International Partners

Co-founded in 1994 by longtime Unity Church members Segundo and Joan Velasquez, Mano a Mano International Partners is dedicated to improving health and economic wellbeing in rural Bolivia. A new initiative, the Center for Ecological Agriculture, is teaching subsistence farmers sustainable techniques. This past March, a group of Unity pilgrims visited the farmers to help build adobe greenhouses. This summer, a repeat of last year's very successful teacher training conference coordinated by Unity Church volunteers will also link Minnesotans to Bolivia via Mano a Mano.

### March 30: The Free Clothing Center

The Free Clothing Center located at Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church in St. Paul has developed a uniquely welcoming and respectful environment to provide free, good quality clothing and household goods to those in need. It operates with 25 volunteers the first and third Saturday of each month from September through June. As many as 50 families use the center each day it is open. This offering will be used to buy coats, underwear, and socks for adults and children as well as bed linens, pillows, and blankets. Julie Schmid, Aidan Vellanga and others from Unity Church have volunteered at the Free Clothing Center.

# BOARD OF TRUSTEES / ANTI-RACISM LEADERSHIP TEAM

## Shared Vision

From Steve Harper  
Chair, Board of Trustees



As I sit at home writing this in February, the snow is pouring down outside with 4-8 inches forecasted. I long for spring. Everyone I know longs for spring. I long for warmth, ice-less sidewalks, and greening earth. And yet, the flakes falling to the frozen ground have an entrancing beauty all their own. They fill the air, creating a translucent curtain gently floating downwards. Cold splendor.

We are creatures who experience such contradictions.

Last year we, as a community of faith, developed new Ends Statements that embody the values and aspirational visions of our shared life. Now, the Board is working with some of the challenges and contradictions inherent in living out those values and helping bring those visions to reality. This work brings us face to face with several questions:

- How do we embrace the inevitable differences in our individual interpretations of the Ends?
- How do we minister to the day-to-day needs and desires of our community while working to make the long-term dreams vital and achievable?
- How do we deal with the inherent contradictions between our desire to expand our programs and the need to do so within a fixed budget?
- And most importantly, how do we build and hold onto a spirit of collaboration as we face these contradictions with openness and compassion?

Over the coming months, you will be hearing more about the work of the Board as we share our work with you. Please share your thoughts with us as well. What questions do you have about the present realities and the envisioned future of our church? How do you want to be involved in bringing those dreams about? What slippery slopes and icy sidewalks should we be wary of? What beauty should we be attending to with our full presence?

Let us know.

*Scan the codes below with your smart phone to find us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter!*



## An Invitation

From the Anti-Racism Leadership Team Communications Group (Brooke Darst Rice, Amy Kujawski, Peter Heege)

Unity Church offers considerable programming related to the congregation's anti-racism work and the ARLT is inviting you to participate in a few of these upcoming learning opportunities:

### Beloved Conversations

On March 5 and April 2, Beloved Conversations continues among members of Unity Church, Above Every Name and Morning Star Baptist, and the conversation has been expanded to include those that were not able to participate in the programming which began last fall. All are welcome! (See page 7 for details.) The following comments from participants reflect importance of the meaningful conversations that are happening:

"Deep appreciation for the opportunity to hear and be invited to speak about culture, race and hope. The simplicity of building trusting connections one story at a time. May I experience more; may we all experience deeply."

"I really enjoyed the exercise regarding 'culture,' or, 'where are you from?' The act of moving around the room to find one's 'place,' and then hearing people talk about their hometown and childhood experiences with other races or cultures was very thought-provoking. Hearing other people's experiences that were so different from mine helped me realize 'where I'm from'...and to have some small but better understanding of others.

When we broke into the smaller groups that process became even more personal and ...fascinating. We were encouraged to use 'I' statements, rather than 'generalizations,' and that so changes the dynamics of the conversation. I wish every member of Unity could be a part of these conversations. We'd get to know each other so much better, and how wonderful to get to know the people in the other congregations also! We all benefit and grow in the process!!"

### Beloved Conversations Mini Retreat April 11-12

This is another chance to get in on the conversation! Unity will conduct a two-day mini-retreat to capture the flavor of the discussion, storytelling and community building, focusing on race and our spirituality central to Beloved Conversations. The retreat will be held Friday from 6:30-9:30 p.m. and Saturday from 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Lunch will be served. On Palm Sunday all are encouraged to join Above Every Name for a joint service with Morningstar Baptist at 1:00 p.m.

### Understanding Mass Incarceration

On Wednesday, April 23, the ARLT hopes you will join us for the final Cradle to Prison Pipeline program, which began with the congregational read of *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander, will focus on the difficulties formerly incarcerated youth and adults face in finding safe and affordable housing upon re-entry. (See page 9 for details.)

These are moving, difficult, and important conversations and learning opportunities that are crucial in furthering our progress toward becoming an actively anti-racist institution.



## Jennifer Nordstrom

2013-14 Hallman Ministerial Intern

In February, I led a small group of Minnesotans to the Mass Moral March in Raleigh, NC. The group reflected on their experience in an article in this newsletter, and shared stories, photos and videos at an event when they returned. I will leave the larger story to those venues. As a social justice organizer, several things about the movement in North Carolina stood out to me:

1. The fusion coalition was strictly issue-based and non-partisan. While this is the norm for single-issue non-profits, it is less common to see multi-issue coalitions come together with an explicitly non-partisan platform. It gives the group the opportunity to frame the debate from a moral perspective, rather than either a single issue or a left v. right political stance. It opens the space for dialogue among unlikely parties about why supporters care about an issue from a moral perspective and how they see morality operating in the political arena. We get to ask: does morality mean an obligation to care for our fellow humans? Does American democracy include all Americans?
2. The Unitarian Universalist congregations in North Carolina made a commitment to follow the leadership of the North Carolina NAACP and its president and spiritual leader, Rev. Dr. William Barber. The NC UU congregations explicitly called on the UUs who traveled to North Carolina to also follow that leadership, and we did. As we work to combat institutional racism, it is important to follow the leadership of communities of color. In North Carolina, Unitarian Universalists did this even though the Rev. Barber's organizing style and theological language was sometimes outside our UU cultural norm. This is a testament to both Rev. Barber's powerful and inclusive leadership and to the willingness of UUs to be led outside their cultural comfort zone. I hope Unitarian Universalists continue to expand our skills, capacity, and willingness to do this.
3. Unitarian Universalist ministers in North Carolina were committed enough to this movement to engage in civil disobedience and be arrested. Arrests and criminal charges carry very different consequences for people of privilege—our ministers fall at varying intersections of race, class, gender, citizenship and sexuality privilege, and being a minister accords a level of privilege in the justice system—than for those without it. Our people have different experiences and understandings of authority and how they will be treated in the system. Regardless, there is always some risk and consequence in committing civil disobedience and all of these Unitarian Universalist leaders were willing to take the risk and face the consequences because of the strength of their moral convictions. What sort of spiritual resources do we need as a movement in order to face the risk and consequences that may result from standing on the side of love?

## Regional Assembly

*One event in four locations: possibilities abound!*

The MidAmerica Region of the Unitarian Universalist Association includes nearly 200 UU congregations in parts or all of these states: Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska. The MidAmerica Regional Assembly is a weekend of coming together for enriching fellowship, inspiring lectures and workshops, and deepening worship. This year, the MidAmerica Region is continuing its innovative approach by holding its Annual Meeting and Conference in FOUR locations, linked together by technology. This is a new era in UUism, and we're living it here.

This approach gives you lots of choices:



Want a weekend getaway? Then consider going to Topeka, where the conference runs from Friday evening through Sunday. You'll get to worship, learn, be entertained, and work together, and learn more about the historic *Brown v Board of Education* decision.



Have something to do on Sunday that's not Regional Assembly related? Then check out the Wausau site—gathering and worship on Friday night, then a Saturday full of keynote, workshops, and social justice event. You'll be able to spend Saturday night in your own bed.

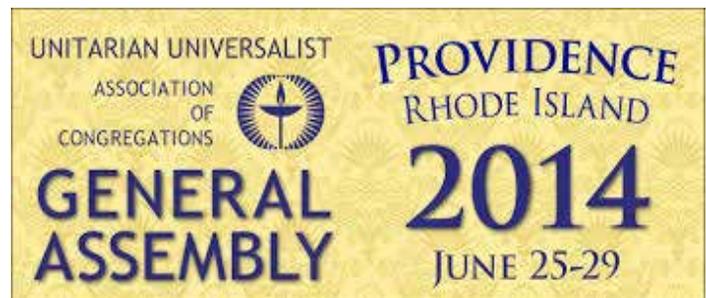


Then there's the day-long events in both Bloomington, Indiana (we have congregations in three different Bloomingtons!), and Ann Arbor. With the advantage of the Eastern time zone, you can gather early enough to still be connected with the keynote coming out of Topeka, have your own worship, workshops and social justice activity, and make it a day trip.



More information and registration materials can be found at <http://www.midamericauua.org/events/regional-assembly>.

Registration is now open. If you are interested in attending as a delegate from Unity Church, please contact Rev. Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x107.



# PATHWAY TO MEMBERSHIP

## Welcome Words

What is the role of community in the religious life? This is a consistent theme of exploration with both new and long-time members of Unity Church. We value the Unitarian Universalist respect for personal religious freedom and individual conscience, but deep down we have an abiding suspicion that being religious alone is not enough. In community we discover the gift of engagement and challenge each other to be both vulnerable and courageous. In community we honor life's milestones and help one another to walk through the joys and sorrows of our days. In community we lift up a larger vision for our humanity and help to keep it alive in our larger world. No community will ever be perfect, but that is also its greatest gift to us — that we can come together in our imperfect, beautiful humanness to create a religious home filled with so much Spirit, wonder, and commitment. How grateful I am for the congregation who have and continue to shape who I am today. Thank you! See you in church.

Rev. Lisa Friedman, Director of Congregational Life

## Pathway to Membership

Sign up for Pathway to Membership classes at the Welcome Table on Sundays or contact Rev. Lisa Friedman, Director of Congregational Life, at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x107. Childcare is available by contacting Christy Randall at 651-228-1456 x127 or [christy@unityunitarian.org](mailto:christy@unityunitarian.org) at least one week in advance.

### Welcome to Unity: Our Class for Newcomers

**Sunday March 23, 5:45–7:00 p.m.** ~also offered~  
**Wednesday March 26, 7:15–8:30 p.m.**

If you have been visiting Unity and would like to find out more about Unitarian Universalism and our congregation, we invite you to join us for a *Welcome to Unity* class.

### Finding Yourself at Unity: A Deeper Exploration

**Tuesday March 4, 11, 18 6:30–8:30 p.m.** ~also offered~  
**Saturday May 3, 9:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.**

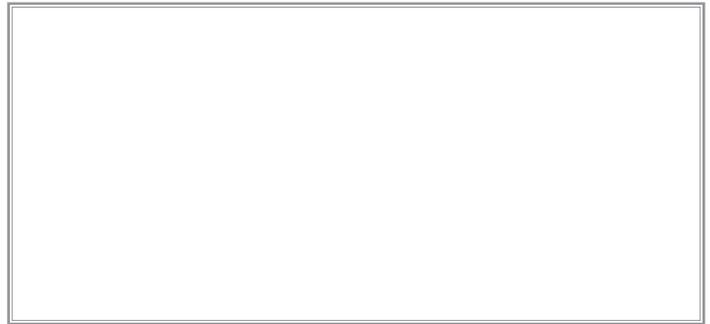
In this class, we will have an opportunity to share part of our religious journey, to take a more in depth look at the history of Unity Church, to discuss the expectations and benefits of membership, and get to know the programs and ministries of the congregation.

### Committing to Unity: Joining Unity Church

**Wednesday March 19, 7:15–9:00 p.m.** ~also offered~  
**Wednesday June 4, 7:15–8:30 p.m.**

This class explores the deeper meanings and expectations of membership and shared ministry. It offers time to reflect on the meaning of generosity and how you can discover the places in your life where the world's needs meets the gifts and joy you have to offer. The class concludes with a ceremony as participants sign the membership book and officially join the church!

## Welcome New Members!



*New members pictured (l-r): John Sherman, Mary Nienaber, John, Mike LaFleur*

### John

I am a student at United Theological Seminary. I am happy to be walking with all of us on this journey of questions and change. I am excited to be a part of this spiritual home and to strive toward the beloved community.

### Mike LaFleur

I am happy to have found a spiritual home at Unity Church; a place which helps me to live more deeply, and connect with other thoughtful people. I live over by Lake Calhoun. I have a lovely boyfriend, Giuseppe, work on market strategies at Emerson in Chanhassen, and love lifting heavy weights at The Movement in Uptown.

### Mary Nienaber

I recently moved to the area and am a new “empty nester.” My passions are music, physical activity, and social justice. I followed my sister here and found that Unity Church is aligned with my values. I want learn, grow and give back to church community.

### John Sherman

I am married for 42 years to Phyllis, my lifelong partner and best friend. My family includes daughters Jennifer Sherman, Katherine Sherman-Hoehn and son-in-law Fitz Hoehn, and granddaughter Sophia. I read, garden, and engage is partisan politics. I came to Unity Church because this is the community that Fritz and Kat chose to nurture Sophia.

## Ageless Grace Class Offered at Unity

**Thursday, March 13 and 27 • 12:30-1:00 p.m.**

The Ageless Grace program focuses on the healthy longevity of the body, mind, emotions and spirit. All of the exercises are designed to be practiced in a chair, and to music, and they consist of movements that are natural and organic – there's no need to learn any special choreography. They are ideal for anyone who would like to stay youthful and vibrant, including those with movement challenges. Pola Rest is a certified Ageless Grace educator, as well as a multi-language teacher and dance enthusiast. The cost of attending the class is \$3.

# WELLSPRING WEDNESDAY

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Wellspring Wednesday is a multi-generational opportunity to gather together midweek at church for food, fellowship, and learning. Dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship at 6:45 p.m., and an evening of rich programming beginning at 7:10 p.m. Childcare is available and you do not have to sign up in advance. The cost for dinner is: \$7/adult, \$4/child ages 5 to 12, \$2/child ages 2 to 4 (children under age 2 are free), and \$20/family, and can be paid by cash or check. Financial assistance is available to cover the cost of dinners; contact Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x107.

## March 5

*Dinner: TBA*

### **Embodied Spiritual Practice with Heart of the Beast Session 1 of 2**

Come and explore hands-on spiritual practice and our monthly theme with Heart of the Beast puppeteer Sandy Spieler. Broken? We will tear paper and re-assemble a body with the wisdom of our hands. How is every broken piece of this luscious world actually part of holding us together? Participants of all ages are welcome and are encouraged to come to both sessions if possible — children younger than eight should come with an adult partner.

### **Beloved Wellspring Conversations**

Unity will join with other community churches and organizations including Above Every Name, Morningstar Baptist, Men of Ujaama, and others for a series of Wellspring Wednesday events based on the exciting Beloved Conversations experience late last fall. You're invited to "break bread" together at dinner and then join in topical activities, large and small group discussion, and the sharing of stories, focusing on race, faith, and our desire to work towards the Beloved Community. We will explore the cultural iceberg: what is under the surface? You need not to have attended other Beloved Conversations to attend this one.

### **Working Toward Prayer**

### **New Family Religious Education Orientation**

## March 12

*Dinner: Baked potato bar! Oven baked potatoes with all the toppings you can imagine (and some you can't!), salad, and chocolate cake.*

### **Singing Tribute to Pete Seeger**

Join Unity musicians and song leaders in an evening of singing tribute to Pete Seeger. Singers of all ages are welcome to remember his life and legacy.

### **Why Factory Farm Use of Antibiotics Puts Your Health at Risk And What You Can Do About It**

*Presentation by Food and Water Watch, sponsored by Unity's Sustainable Agriculture Group*

Factory farms are playing by their own rules when it comes to antibiotics — putting the medicines we rely on in jeopardy. 80% of antibiotics in the U.S. are used on factory farms, primarily to make animals grow faster and to compensate for living filthy conditions. This is not how our antibiotics should be used, and it's making these life-saving medicines less effective when we really need them. Nonprofits Food and Water Watch and

Healthy Food Action are launching a local effort here in St. Paul to demand federal action to ban the overuse of antibiotics on factory farms. In order to show City Council that we need protection from this public health threat, our elected officials need to hear from their constituents- and that's where you come in! Come to this presentation to hear how you can take action to save antibiotics for medicine, not factory farms!

### **Working Toward Prayer**

## March 19

*Dinner: TBA*

### **Embodied Spiritual Practice with Heart of the Beast Session 2 of 2: See March 5 description for details.**

### **Advance Care Planning: What is a "Good Death"?**

**Lynn Betzold and Marcy Schaak**

Polls asking Americans about how they would like to die indicate that most of us want a peaceful transition, with the end spent at home surrounded by our loved ones. Yet the reality is that far fewer than voice this preference actually spend their final days in this way. One reason for this disparity is that people are not clear about their preferences for end-of-life care, leaving their family members unsure of how to proceed. Deciding who should speak for you when you cannot speak for yourself is one of the most important decisions anyone can make. Representatives from Honoring Choices Minnesota will join us to talk about the hows and whys of this important discussion.

### **Working Toward Prayer**

### **Pathway to Membership Class: Committing to Unity**

## March 26

*Dinner: red curry and coconut chicken soup with rice noodles, spring rolls, snap pea and ginger salad, tapioca pearl dessert*

### **Embodied Practice: Learning from our Brokenness**

Join Spiritual Director Sarah Cledwyn in loving community to explore the worship theme of brokenness. We will all at some point in our lives find ourselves feeling broken and these feelings are stored in our memories and in the memory of our bodies. During this session participants will be invited to use a body technique to locate and process body memories that are stirring in us. Participants will not be expected to air their deepest pain to the group, but will focus on the process of listening to our bodies and what we learn from them. Participants can verbally share their experience at their own comfort level if they feel so moved.

### **Pathway to Membership Class: Welcome to Unity**

# MASS MORAL MARCH ON RALEIGH

## Mass Moral March on Raleigh

From Sue Conner

*I want my grandchildren to live in a society that offers a smile and a helping hand, not a scowl and a fist. The actions by the North Carolina legislature and governor are not about doing good, they are just raw power and greed. That is why they are so clearly immoral and unjust. I went to stand with people who are saying that there must be justice and opportunity for all. — Sherman Eagles, Unity Church*

*Last fall I had the privilege of taking part in the "Beloved Conversations" program at Unity. I went to Raleigh because it was a chance to act on the covenant to anti-racism/anti-oppression work that I made with myself and my companions.*

*By participating, I had the sense of being part of a vast and powerful force for justice; the recognition that our presence and support will energize and sustain those who will continue the struggle in North Carolina; and a renewed commitment to keep going forward myself, and not let setbacks stop me. — Jane Bacon, White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church*

*Fifty years ago, people took incredible risks and even died to secure the right to vote. When I heard about this march, I knew I had to be part of it. It was good to see and hear the people who've been working in North Carolina; we need to learn more about their strategies, because we are facing the same issues here in Minnesota. — Pauline Eichten, Unity Church*

*On the 2011 Living Legacy Pilgrimage, I learned about the life and death struggles for voting rights that our country endured only decades ago. In 2012 many of us in Minnesota worked hard to defeat a constitutional amendment proposal that would have effectively restricted voter rights in Minnesota. I wanted to go to North Carolina because people there were asking us to come and help them to stand up and be heard. — Sue Conner, Unity Church*



*The Moral March was being held on what would have been my mother's birthday. Born before women had the right to vote, she often talked about the importance of voting. The rally presented an opportunity to stand for social justice. The energy of the movement made me hopeful and I was glad to be a small part of it. — Sharon Hogenson, Unity Church*

A few weeks ago, our congregation heard a "call" that had come to the UUA from the NAACP in North Carolina. We were being asked to join a Mass Moral March on the state capitol in Raleigh. An annual occurrence since 2007, it has grown in numbers as the state government has put policies in place that are negatively affecting more and more citizens. The North Carolina NAACP has partnered with over 150 social justice organizations in a "fusion coalition" whose rallying cry is "Forward together, not one step back!"

The weekend of February 8, nine of us from Minnesota traveled to Raleigh to join the Moral March, including six from Unity Church. We gathered with other Unitarian Universalists on Friday night to hear their stories and learn more about the "Forward Together" movement. Last year throughout the legislative session, people participated in Moral Monday protests. Nearly 1,000

people were arrested for non-violent civil disobedience, including all of the Unitarian ministers who spoke on Friday.

On Saturday, we marched with an estimated 1,500 UUs in our yellow shirts, proclaiming that we stand on the side of love, joining the tens of thousands from North Carolina and 30-some other states. We sang together. We worshipped together. After the march, we gathered in regional groups to discuss what this movement might teach us about the situation in our home state.

We were deeply impressed by the inclusiveness of the spiritual leader of this movement, Rev. Dr. William Barber, who says that "'We' is the most important word in the social justice vocabulary." He urges us to seek "Higher Ground," a higher moral ground, in our public policy making.

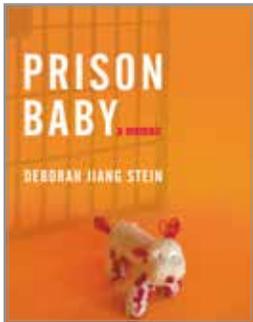
It was impossible to be there, talking with local citizens, hearing their concerns, and not realize that we in Minnesota are vulnerable to some of the same egregious policy actions that have been taken in North Carolina. It was impossible to be there and not realize that as citizens we must be involved in our democracy and must demand that policies be viewed through a moral lens.

For information about this movement see [www.naacpnc.org](http://www.naacpnc.org).

## Prison Baby

Book Launch at Unity Church on March 21

The Unity Church Racial and Restorative Justice Outreach Teams and the Library and Bookstall Team are hosting the launch of *Prison Baby*, a new memoir by Deborah Jiang Stein set to be released on March 4 by Beacon Press. This launch will be held on Friday, March 21, at 7:00 p.m. at Unity Church. The evening will include a conversation with the author followed by time for questions and book sales.



*Prison Baby* is a deeply personal and inspiring memoir recounting one woman's struggles—beginning with her birth in prison—to find self-acceptance. Even at twelve years old author Deborah Jiang Stein, the adopted daughter of a progressive Jewish couple in Seattle, felt like an outsider. Her multiracial features set her apart from her well-intentioned

white parents who evaded questions about her past. But when Deborah discovered a letter revealing the truth—she was born in prison to a heroin-addicted mother and spent the first year of her life there—she spiraled into emotional lockdown. For years she turned to drugs, violence, and crime as a way to cope with her grief. Ultimately, Deborah overcame the stigma, shame, and secrecy of her birth and found peace by helping others—proving that redemption and acceptance is possible, even from the darkest corners.

Deborah Jiang Stein is a national speaker, writer, and founder of The unPrison Project ([www.unprisonproject](http://www.unprisonproject)) a nonprofit working to empower and inspire incarcerated women and girls with life skills and mentoring to plan and prepare for a successful life after prison, including the Behind Books not Bars program.



"A powerful story." —Piper Kerman, author of *Orange Is the New Black*

"Thank you for emerging the kind and whole person your words make clear you are." —Gloria Steinem

"Deborah Jiang Stein has beaten the cycle of intergenerational incarceration, despite the odds against her—multiracial, born in a federal prison to a heroin-addicted mother. Her story offers hope to the possibility of personal transformation for anyone." —Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking* and Pulitzer Prize nominee

A Unity Church–Unitarian  
Racial and Restorative Justice  
Wellspring Wednesday Series

## Understanding Mass Incarceration...

## Ending the Cradle to Prison Pipeline

This series has three areas of focus: education (fall 2013), jobs (winter 2014) and housing (spring 2014), and will incorporate the issues of prevention and incarceration, and the effects of the War on Drugs and the Minnesota criminal justice system into each offering. Each session will follow a similar format:

- An introduction grounded in our Unitarian Universalist faith imperative
- An overview of the justice issue delivered by the guest speaker
- A first hand story by someone who has experienced the “pipeline”
- A call to action including opportunities for service and advocacy with community partners
- A question and answer session

Programs are held at Unity Church and run from 7:10 p.m. to approximately 9:00 p.m.

## Upcoming! April 23 • 7:10 p.m.

The sixth and final program in this series will look at the difficulties formerly incarcerated youth and adults face in finding safe and affordable housing upon re-entry. In addition, this session will explore the impact the “War of Drugs” has had on the lives of people caught in the pipeline and the explosion of for-profit prisons in this country.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Minnesota Safe Schools For All Legislation

### *Why do we need this bill?*

A 2011 report from the U.S. Department of Education rated Minnesota's anti-bullying law the weakest in the nation. Current Minnesota law, which is just 37 words, requires school districts to have a policy against bullying, but it doesn't specify what the policy should say or who should be protected. It doesn't require training for educators or learning activities for students on bullying prevention or intervention. It also doesn't address what should be done to help students who engage in bullying to examine their attitudes and change their behavior.

More than 100 education, disability, youth, religious (including the Unity Church Rainbow Chalice Alliance Outreach Team), LGBT and social service organizations have joined the Safe Schools for All Coalition and are working to pass anti-bullying legislation to protect all students. To support this legislation, sign the petition to Minnesota legislators urging them to pass the Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Act which can be found online at [www.outfront.org](http://www.outfront.org).

Sponsored by the Unity Church Rainbow Chalice Alliance Outreach Ministry Team that is committed to supporting LGBTQ youth in our schools and communities.

## Minnesota Unitarian Universalist Social Justice Alliance General Meeting

**Sunday, March 2 • 1:00–3:00 p.m.**

**First Universalist Church of Minneapolis**

3400 Dupont Avenue, Minneapolis

Join us for a rewarding program including:

- Keynote address and legislative update from Sherri Knuth, Policy and Outreach Manager for League of Women Voters Minnesota and MUUSJA Board Member
- Brief updates from MUUSJA issue working groups with focus on how you can engage in 2014
- Inspiring remarks by Louis J. King II, the President and CEO of Summit Academy OIC, as he accepts our Community Partner Award for Hire MN's racial equity work on the Central Corridor LRT Project
- Recognition of Ralph Wyman's years of service and celebration of Laura Smidzik serving as acting executive director.

Gather in spirit as we work for justice throughout Minnesota! For more information or to RSVP go to [www.muusja.org](http://www.muusja.org) or call 612-998-6624.

## May means Project Home at Unity Church

**From Ann Russell, Project Home Team**

As we struggle through the coldest winter in recent memory we often complain of "cabin fever." In May—if this winter ever ends—we will probably groan about spring cleaning and yard work. However, we know we are privileged, and grateful, to have a safe place we can call our own. For some families this is not the case. To play a small but important role in helping these families transition to a more secure home Unity Church has a long-standing partnership with the St. Paul Area Council of Churches, the Family Place day shelter, and 24 local churches that provide overnight shelter for mothers, fathers, and their children for one month each year. In May we will once again open our doors to these families.

### *What does this take?*

This is a huge effort! Volunteers, with the help of Project Home staff from the Council of Churches, transform the lower level of our building into a safe and welcoming place for families to spend the night. Our classrooms become private sleeping accommodations for individual families while the Coming of Age classroom space functions as a communal family room. Over 100 volunteer hosts must be recruited before our guests begin to arrive. Each day during May we need three volunteers in the evening and two to stay overnight. The whole community rolls up its sleeves to make this happen.

### *What does it offer you?*

Spending time with our guests is a special opportunity to step out of your own daily challenges. It is sometimes profoundly moving. It can also be really fun and rewarding. There are many opportunities to get to know our guests. Once families are settled in their rooms and snacks are made available, evening volunteers (5:30-9:00 p.m.) engage in everything from art projects and storytime with busy children, to card games and conversation with tired moms and dads. Things begin to settle down by the time the overnight hosts arrive at 8:30. Lights go out at 9:00. Overnight hosts spend the night and put out a quick breakfast for our guests the next morning before the families head back to the Family Place, school, or work at 6:30 a.m. Project Home provides us with a wonderful opportunity to engage in a tangible and meaningful way with families in real need of our care and concern.

### *How do I get involved?*

Stop by the Project Home table in the Parish Hall on Sundays (beginning in late March/early April) and learn more about how you can be part of this worthy effort. It takes a village to raise a child and a whole church community to support these vulnerable families. Sign-up for evening or overnight host slots that need to be filled every day during May. We ask that you attend a simple training class which will ease you into the volunteer role. You won't regret it.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH MINISTRY

## Working to End Homelessness

### From the Affordable Housing Outreach Ministry Team

At Unity Church we know that homelessness is an important justice issue. Recently over 125 of you told us what home means to you. Home is a haven, a place of safety from which we can grow into who we are meant to be. However, many in our community do not have this base. Every day 14,000 people are homeless in Minnesota. Half of those are under age 21. Lack of stable housing keeps members of our community from being able to meet basic health, safety and education needs required for survival and paths to employment and self-sufficiency.

### How can you help?

- Serve as a host for families seeking temporary overnight shelter through Project Home at Unity Church during the month of May (see page 10)
- Learn about housing issues for youth and formerly incarcerated individuals caught in the cradle to prison pipeline during a Wellspring Wednesday program sponsored by Unity's Racial and Restorative Justice Teams (see page 9)
- Support Unity's youth as they spend "A Night on the Street" in April. This event is designed to increase awareness of youth homelessness and raise money to help with efforts to end the problem (details coming)
- Sign up to help build homes this summer with other members of Unity Church in partnership with Habitat for Humanity (details coming)

### What else can we do?

Last year Unity Church members' advocacy activities helped obtain \$4 million in state funding for homeless youth services. This year Unity's Affordable Housing team has worked with its community partner, Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, to advocate for \$100 million bonding funds proposed for affordable housing in the 2014 Minnesota State Legislature. HF 2031 sets up a fund administered by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency for proposals statewide aimed to preserve and repair housing stock, create housing options for extremely low income Minnesotans, and to leverage private funding to build supportive housing for target groups. Prior Crossing, a Beacon Interfaith Collaborative supportive youth housing project that local churches (including Unity Church) have worked several years to build in St. Paul could benefit from this bill.

Thank you to the many of you who have used the Unity Church postcard to write your legislators. Members of the Affordable Housing team visited the capitol and copies of our postcard are already posted in legislators' offices. Team members will continue to ask you to contact your legislator and be a part of advocacy delegations to the capitol. If you wish to be part of the Affordable Housing team, the next meeting is Wednesday, March 12, at 5:30 p.m. Contact Pat Haff at [pat@unityunitarian.org](mailto:pat@unityunitarian.org) for further information.

## Do you believe in second chances?

### Have your voice heard at Second Chance Day on the Hill!

Join with members of the Unity Church Racial and Restorative Justice Teams to participate in the "Second Chance Day on the Hill" on Wednesday, March 12. The teams are part of the Second Chance Coalition made up of over 50 non-profit organizations that work toward criminal justice reforms. Following last year's Second Chance Coalition's success with "Ban the Box" legislation and progress on juvenile records reform, the coalition legislative goals this year are focused on the following two issues.

1. **Voting Restoration.** Minnesotans coming out of prison lose the right to vote until they have been released from supervision, including while they are living in the community. People living, working and paying taxes in our communities should be able to participate in voting for their elected officials. The Minnesota Second Chance Coalition supports restoring the right to vote immediately upon release from incarceration.
2. **Criminal and Juvenile Records Relief** (expungement). Minnesotans who have completed their sentence should not forever be held back by it. Under the current law, it is impossible for most people to ever have their records sealed. The Minnesota Second Chance Coalition supports changes that provide meaningful, clear, and accessible opportunities for expungement of criminal and juvenile records.

The Second Chance Day on the Hill starts with a large rally at 2:00 p.m. in the Minnesota State Capitol Building Rotunda. Meetings with legislators will take place after the rally with training available for these visits. For more information or to carpool to the capitol, contact Pat Haff at [pat@unityunitarian.org](mailto:pat@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x126.

## Sustainable Agriculture Group

**Meeting and book discussion:** *Fruitlands: The Alcott Family and Their Search for Utopia* by Richard Francis

**Thursday, March 13 • 5:30-7:30 p.m. • DeCramer Room**

This month, the Sustainable Agriculture group will (continue to) read a lively historical account of "Fruitlands" a highly Utopian (and very unsuccessful) farm commune established by Bronson Alcott, Louisa May Alcott's father, and discuss the book at our March meeting. The book has a lot to say about the connection between utopian farm visions, transcendentalism, and Unitarianism. For those of you following along at home, we had planned to do this last month but had a surprise guest instead! Thus we moved the book discussion to March, and gave everyone a little more time to get the book and read it. We will also talk about the church's food processes, from buying to composting. We all bring some food to share at the meeting.

# SPRING EQUINOX / FELLOWSHIP GROUPS

## Spring Equinox Reflection

The spring equinox occurs midway between the longest night of the year, at winter solstice, and the longest day of the year, at summer solstice. It is called an equinox from the Latin “equal” and “night,” but in reality, the equality of day and night is only approximate and depends on your geographic location! In 2014, the spring equinox occurs at 10:57 a.m. on March 20.



We’ve had a long, cold winter this year—the ground covered in snow and the temperatures lower than usual, for longer than usual. It’s hard to believe that under the snow cover, under the frozen ground, new life is stirring and will surge forth into spring, but this seasonal miracle is coming, even here to Minnesota!

The dark womb of winter provides the fertile ground that invites us to dream ourselves into a new seasonal cycle, in which new life will spring forth. From the deep dive into the unknown darkness of the dreamtime, new visions for our life take form. The Cailleach, or Winter Queen, completes her rule anytime between Imbolc (Brigid’s Day: February 1) and Beltaine (May 1), depending on when the first signs of spring are evident. This is also the Chinese New Year of the Yang Horse, which strongly calls in the energy and vitality of spring. The Yang Horse embodies the element of fire, bringing warmth and energy to the land. Rooted in the inner vision and intuitive knowing the wintertime brought us, the Yang Horse surges toward freedom, helping new growth to push up through the soil and reach into the light of day.

The light is lasting longer, the days are warming, people are coming out of doors, and nature is beginning to send forth new life. Following her rhythm, it’s time for us, too, to grow the new shoots of our lives, to allow the dreams to push up through the warming earth, to grow leaves, and move toward our own manifestation. Brighde, the Summer Queen, will soon return to tend our visions until they have fully ripened into maturity. What are you dreaming into new life? What shoots would you like to nurture, tend, and grow into manifestation this year? How would you like to answer spring’s beckoning to move into fresh, new growth?

You may want to write in a journal, or try a short ritual alone or with friends that could include the following:

- Light a candle, yellow or light green in color.
- Place nearby a symbol of winter’s dark dreamtime and a symbol of spring’s fresh, new, forward-moving energy.
- Get really comfortable and cozy, maybe even sipping a warm drink.
- Sense/feel into your dreams, your visions for your life—the ones that arise deep inside the dark warmth of your own bodysoul. What in you wants to move from dream to manifestation, to grow and be expressed in the world this year? How can you commit to nurturing this growth?
- Breathe each awareness in, receiving it, saying “yes” to each even if you don’t know how it will unfold.
- When you are ready, say thank you and blow out the candle.

After the spring equinox, the days continue to grow longer, until at summer solstice, we’ll be back to the longest day. May you welcome and find grace in this changing of the seasons.

Spring Blessings,  
Katy Taylor  
Seasonal Coordinator Worship Associate  
[katy@thewingedheart.net](mailto:katy@thewingedheart.net)

## Ongoing Groups

*These groups are open to all members and friends of Unity Church. If you are looking to connect with a group, please visit [www.unityunitarian.org/fellowship.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/fellowship.html) or call the church office at 651-228-1456.*

**A New Look at the Bible:** Second Thursday of the month (March 13) at 7:00 p.m.

**Afterthoughts:** This group meets after the 9:00 a.m. service.

**Caregivers Group:** An informal support group for caregivers. Third Thursday of the month (March 20) from Noon–2:00 p.m.

**Evergreen Quilters:** Second Tuesday of the month (March 11) from 7:00–9:00 p.m. and fourth Saturday of the month (March 22) from 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

**Job Transitions/Networking Group:** Every Monday at 9:00 a.m. in the Anderson Library.

**Living With Grief Group:** A group for people living with grief and loss. Third Tuesday of the month (March 18) from 7:00–9:00 p.m.

**Men’s Retirement Group:** Monday, March 10 and 24, from 1:00–3:00 p.m.

**Unitots!:** A drop-in playgroup for families (parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles) with kids through preschool age. Every Monday, from 9:30 a.m.–noon, in the nursery.

**Unity Book Club:** Second Tuesday (March 11) of the month from 7:00–8:30 p.m. The book they will be discussing is

**Unity Bridge Club:** Friday, March 7, at 7:00 p.m.

**Women’s Retirement Group:** Second and Fourth Thursday of the month (March 11 and 25) from 1:00–3:00 p.m. Contact Leah Doherty at [doher001@umn.edu](mailto:doher001@umn.edu).

**Zen Meditation:** Find renewal and grounding. Tuesdays from 5:30–6:30 p.m., in the Ames Chapel. Contact Ken Ford at [kford5@comcast.net](mailto:kford5@comcast.net).



## What's New in the Library and Bookstall!

From Louise Merriam, Libraries and Bookstall Team

The Unity libraries and Bookstall try to acquire the titles mentioned by the ministers during Sunday services or listed as appropriate to the month's worship theme in *commUNITY*. This month the Bookstall has stocked the following titles that support the March theme of Brokenness:

- *Broken: The Story of Addiction* by William Moyers
- *For All of Us One Day* by Richard Blanco
- *Soul Repair* by Rita Block
- *Little Book of Life* by Rumi

Several of the titles are also available in the Anderson Adult Library on the second floor of the Elliot Wing.

In addition to stocking titles to support the current month's worship theme, the Bookstall also keeps a good supply of perennial favorites, such as *Hymns of the Spirit*, *The UU Pocket Guide*, poetry by Mary Oliver and books by Wendell Berry. The Bookstall also has its own version of March Madness, which at Unity is not about basketball, but about women's history. During this month, women's history titles and other books have special prices that turn browsers into customers. But never fear — whether you are looking for something to buy or just checking out the inventory, you are always welcome to visit the Bookstall.

## Open Page Writing Session

Led by Consulting Literary Minister Karen Hering, Open Page writing sessions are opportunities to correspond with the "still, small voice within." Using stories, poetry, images and objects as well as wisdom from religious teachings, science and history, participants reflect on the month's theme in their own words and on their own pages. Sessions are free but RSVP is required to [karen@unityunitarian.org](mailto:karen@unityunitarian.org).



**Brokenness • Sunday, March 9  
2:00-4:00 p.m. • Unity Church**

"There is a crack in everything," observed Leonard Cohen. "That's how the light gets in." In this guided writing session, we'll explore the places where we experience the world or ourselves as broken, and consider how brokenness sometimes opens our lives to healing and light.

## March Parish Hall Artist

Joe Schur

In the practical arts and the fine arts, bricolage (French for "tinkering") is the construction or creation of a work from a diverse range of things that happen to be available, or a work created by such a process. The bricoleur is someone who works with his hands, his universe of art-making instruments is open and the rules of his game are always to make do with "whatever is at hand." The process I use is heuristic, by this I mean I encourage myself to learn, discover, understand, or solve problems by experimenting, evaluating possible answers or solutions, or by trial and error. The work in this exhibit is bricolage, I am the bricoleur. Your response to the work can mean you are participating in the process of bricolage for, surely, you recompose a fresh, challenging image in your mind.

Much of the artwork in this exhibit combines photography and painting. In some cases, the art starts with a photograph; in others, a painting is the starting point, the photograph is secondary. As my work is non-objective or 'presentational' as I like to call it (as compared to 'representational'), I don't paint, for example, a horse from a photo of a horse (not that there's anything wrong with that). For works with a photographic starting point, I begin by finding something in the 'real' world that has color, line, shape, volume and value (for example, a rusty door). I then compose the image in my camera view finder, develop/alter the image on my computer, and then print it. The printed image is then again altered by the addition of materials such as pastel, paint or collage. Also in the exhibit are small scale collages comprised of a multitude of materials and layers.

This art comes from a set of spontaneous gestures reflecting both a real and an imagined world. The process is a success when you are excited and intrigued. If you can feel a sense of closeness, if you can engage in a scrutiny of the form and content, then you can make your own message and meaning. This can become a conversation, with the work but mostly with yourself. Art is to dare, flesh out the new, to present ideas in form. There's a constant churning; the work changes, you change, life is motion - action, temporary, driven. The paint, pastel, colored pencil, photography and other media are the means to an end, your experience with the art is the finished product.

## Are you an artist?

*Applications to be a Parish Hall artist will be accepted in April!*

Unity Church-Unitarian will be accepting applications for exhibits during the exhibit calendar year 2014/2015 beginning in April 2014. Exhibits run monthly from September 2014 through August of 2015. More information will be in the April *commUNITY* newsletter as well as online at [www.unityunitarian.org/parish-hall-artists.html](http://www.unityunitarian.org/parish-hall-artists.html).

# MINISTRY WITH CHILDREN AND YOUTH

## Pitter-pattering Questions

[...like raindrops on the window, and little feet running through the house]

From Rev. K.P. Hong, Director of Religious Education



As with many other fairy tales, we recognize the familiar plot: a miller's daughter promises her first-born child to a strange dwarf if he can help her weave flax into gold. He agrees, and later when the child is born, the queen begs him to let her keep her child. He tells her that if she can discover his name by midnight, she can keep her baby. When he appears at midnight, she names him "Rumpelstiltskin!" and he disappears. And so we equip our children with the power of words and language, to gain mastery over the tyranny of impulses and roaming uncertainties, and

begin to tame, coordinate, and stabilize their world. This is no less the case for religious education with children—whose playground is life itself and their play at the edge of their knowing and being—and our task of guiding them into the sacred register of religious speech and liturgical language.

Perhaps not different from artists and architects who are reimagining playgrounds for children, could we imagine our children gathering on Sundays and wonder what sort of *linguistic* or *liturgical* playgrounds they would find in class? What "merry-go-round" words center and tether our children as they explore the centripetal reach of love beyond the safety of what they already know? What "see-saw" liturgies and sacred speech encourage the cooperation-coordination with another child to push up and down, feeling one another's weight in joys and sorrows, as they take turns giving each other rides? What "swing" rituals and shared idioms bless that movement within the arc of freedom and the first taste of flying? What "spiral slide" vocabulary calls them into the joyful *whoosh!* of letting go and entrusting themselves to life's vocational tug and pull?

If the language of Ethics is one of "Ought" and "Should," the language of Science what "Is" or "Probably Is," or the language of Art as "Imagine" or "Pretend," what might be the language of Religion? Like Hebrew that requires the speaker to add vowels—not consonants serviced by lips/mouth/tongue but vowels that originate from the vital pulmonary source of breath itself—what if religious language is essentially the breath of life itself: *Wow! Oh! Aha! Haha!?* What else could capture our brush with mystery, wonder, and the astonishment of being alive? And what speech better reconciles the neocortex with our ancient limbic system than poetry, that curator of our wonder and astonishment?

We inhabit languages that create our world, including this world wounded and exhausted by bureaucratized words, commercialized words, dogmatic words, racist words, bellicose words, cliché words, euphemized words, politically correct words, doublespeak words, and more that distort, diminish, and finally alienate us from life. What if religious education is a poetics of astonishment and wonder, the vital signs of a vibrant spirituality? I smile with such appreciation when I walk past classrooms and hear our children gaining fluency in this sacred language. Come and listen to the poetry and those who curate this sacred practice.

Sharing questions that pitter-patter across our sacred journeys...

Rev. K.P. Hong can be reached by phone at 651-228-1456 x104 or by email at [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org).

If you find joy in being with children and seeing them alive with curiosity, consider being a teacher. Please contact [kp@unityunitarian.org](mailto:kp@unityunitarian.org) if you are interested.

## Updates and Reminders

**There are no R.E. classes on March 30. (Spring Break)**

**Spirit Play:** For families who missed the special opportunity to explore Bedtime Rituals offered by the UU Families group, please contact R.E. staff for further information on learning about this ritual.

Please wonder together with your children about the stories they are hearing. A reminder to please sign-in and sign-out your preschooler; and take a moment to thank a teacher!

**Workshop Rotation:** Classes continue with the theme of "Community" until March 23 when the final theme for rotation "Endings" begins. March 23 is also a Story Sunday and children in Workshop Rotation will begin in the Sanctuary for a Story for All Ages.

Collect your child from his/her Workshop (varies each week, check signs) 15 minutes after the end of worship (10:15 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 5:45 p.m.). Parents can enjoy refreshments and fellowship in the Parish Hall following the service, then come down to collect your child.

**Junior High:** Our second semester classes continue with High Feasts & Holy Days II, UU history and identity, and Religions of Star Trek.

**Coming of Age,** our signature spiritual growth and enrichment program for 9th graders, brings focus to unity amidst diversity during March. Youth continue to develop and finalize their own Credo.

**Our Whole Lives,** a holistic sexuality and relationship program of the Unitarian Universalist Association designed for 7th–9th grade youth, brings attention during March to questions of contraception, pregnancy, and birth.

**Tower Club:** High school youth resume their regular schedule bringing focus to a variety of spiritual practices, including service to the greater world.

# MUSIC MINISTRY

## Music Notes

From Ruth Palmer, Director of Music Ministry

"When music is created during a time of intense personal and collective crisis, it ends up transcending the circumstance of its original creation. This music is timeless."

— Dr. Arthur Jones, The Spirituals Project

On Sunday, February 9, our Unity Singers joined in worship at Morning Star Baptist Church with Rev. Carl Walker. It was an extraordinary experience of sharing joyfully in the unique offerings of both of our congregations, of listening, and of participating and the sharing of love and appreciation between new friends. Rev. Walker will be bringing a musical group to join with us on Sunday, March 9, at the 4:30 service. We hope you will join us in welcoming them.

Previous to this Sunday experience, I have been enjoying work with Rev. Walker and Elaine Ambrose (Unity Church member) on planning a workshop to be presented Arthur Foote Music Sunday weekend that would involve many of our community churches. Elaine introduced us to the work of Dr. Jones, a college friend, and we were immediately excited about creating an opportunity for us to "sing together."

As the "music wing" of Unity Church prepares for its annual Arthur Foote Music Sunday, we want to begin alerting you to the fact that this year, it is an entire weekend! A weekend titled "Voices of Hope." In our music we will celebrate many ideas of hope expressed in music along with the fact that singing together, in itself, is an act of "hope."

Members and friends of Unity Church, we want to invite you to join with us in welcoming Dr. Jones and participating in this wonderful afternoon on Saturday, May 3. The Spirituals Project workshop from 12:00 to 2:00 will be immediately followed, from 2:00 to 3:00, by a time of music presented by various church choral groups and a brief community-sing with Dr. Jones. The Spirituals Project website is [spiritualsproject.org](http://spiritualsproject.org) for your further interest.

What better way to meet each other than through deeply meaningful music. We look forward to welcoming you to this wonderful workshop along with our annual Arthur Foote Music Sunday services on May 4.

## Arthur Foote Music Weekend Events

**Saturday, May 3**

**12:00-2:00 p.m.: Workshop presented by Dr. Arthur Jones, The Spirituals Project**

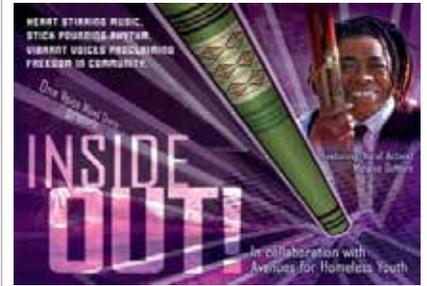
The mission of the Spirituals Project is to preserve and revitalize the music and teachings of the sacred songs called "spirituals," created and first sung by enslaved Africans in America in the 18th and 19th centuries. The Spirituals Project is a broad-based initiative to explore the many, varied dimensions of African American spirituals as art form, tradition and tool; and to invite all people to experience the joy and power of this dynamic music and gift from African Americans to the world.

**2:00-3:00 p.m.: Music presentation by participating choirs and community-sing**

**Sunday, May 4**

**Worship Services at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 4:30 p.m.**

Music presented by Unity's Children's Choir, Unity's Women's Ensemble, Unity Singers, Unity Choir; Laura Sewell, cello; Unity Percussion Ensemble; and special guest, Dr. Arthur Jones, The Spirituals Project



## One Voice Mixed Chorus Presents InsideOUT

Heart stirring music. Stick pounding rhythm. Vibrant voices proclaiming freedom in community.

In collaboration with Avenues for Homeless Youth

Featuring guest artist and Grammy Award nominee Melanie DeMore

### Performances

Friday, April 25 • 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 26 • 7:30 p.m.

Sunday, April 27 • 3:00 p.m.

The Lab Theater  
700 North First Street, Minneapolis

### Tickets

Section A \$25

Section B \$20

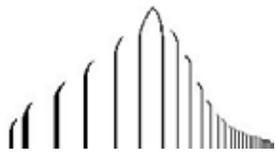
Students/Seniors \$15 (Section B only)

Ticket prices increase by \$5 on day of show

Tickets on sale at [www.ovmc.org](http://www.ovmc.org).

Join our foot-stomping, hand-clapping rhythmic community as special guest artist and Grammy Award nominee Melanie DeMore leads One Voice and teens from Avenues for Homeless Youth in a musical journey guaranteed to transform your world and warm your heart from the InsideOUT!

All performances are handicap accessible with large print and Braille programs available. ASL interpreter at Friday, April 25, performance only.



# UNITY CHURCH-UNITARIAN

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Business Entrance: 732 Holly Avenue • Saint Paul, Minnesota 55104  
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## Elders' Circle Group

**Tuesday, March 18 • 1:00-2:30 p.m. • Center Room**

The Elders' Circle is a group of church elders (self-identified) who get together monthly for fellowship, reflection, and fun. This month, we will talk about social justice and creating change in the world. How do we affect change? What is our theory of social change? How does our faith as Unitarian Universalists call us to social justice work? What kind of work are we called to do? Hallman Ministerial Intern and former social justice organizer Jennifer Nordstrom will make a brief presentation, followed by group discussion. Refreshments will be served. For more information or to RSVP, contact Jennifer at [jennifer@unityunitarian.org](mailto:jennifer@unityunitarian.org) or 651-228-1456 x 129.

## Now Accepting Book Sale Donations!

You've been sitting on that pile of already-read books since last April! Donate them to this year's High School Youth Book Sale which will be held on April 12 and 13 at Unity Church. Drop books (in boxes or sturdy bags, please) in the R.E. office. Out of date textbooks, equipment manuals, and obscure reference books do not sell. Please find another way to recycle these books instead of bringing them to church. Thanks!

## Young Adult Potluck

**Tuesday, March 25 • 6:30 p.m. • Center Room**

Bring your favorite dish to a relaxed evening of good company and conversation. We will also have some time to plan future gatherings, based on survey results. If you have questions, please contact Rev. Lisa Friedman at [lisa@unityunitarian.org](mailto:lisa@unityunitarian.org). Childcare is available with one-week advance notice to Christy Randall at [christy@unityunitarian.org](mailto:christy@unityunitarian.org).

